

# Meeting Summary

## Ukiah Valley Basin Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation Meeting

July 14, 2016 | Ukiah, CA

California State Water Resources Control Board & the County of Mendocino

*Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy, CSU Sacramento (based on meeting notes taken by Sarah Dukett)*

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## Background

California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) provides a statewide framework for sustainable groundwater management. SGMA is intended to support local groundwater management through the oversight of local agencies, which are required to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) by June 30, 2017. GSAs must develop groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) by 2020 or 2022 to achieve sustainability within twenty years of the GSP's adoption.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is providing GSA development support to the County of Mendocino (hereafter County) and various stakeholders in the Ukiah Valley Basin (hereafter Basin). Following a series of public workshops held by the County in 2015, the DWR tasked the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) at California State University, Sacramento to support GSA formation efforts, including assessing the perspectives of a diverse set of stakeholders, facilitating stakeholder discussions, and helping finalize the governance process(es) for one or more GSAs. This is the second public meeting held as part of this process; the first took place on June 14, 2016.

## Meeting Summary

This meeting's purpose and goals were to:

1. Provide an information update on current and upcoming groundwater studies.
2. Clarify how the GSA Formation Committee will work together and develop a set of common

principles.

3. Discuss different GSA models and how to move forward.
4. Discuss GSA formation workplan elements and timing.

## Supporting Documents (on County website)

Supporting Document A – Meeting agenda

Supporting Document B – Presentation slides, Tracy Nishikawa, U.S. Geological Survey

Supporting Document C – Preliminary/Proposed Common Principles and Formation Committee Process

Supporting Document D – GSA Formation: Workplan Elements and Timing

## 1. Welcome, Introductions, Review of Previous Meeting Summary, and Overview of Today's Meeting

Sarah Dukett of the Mendocino County Executive Office and Malka Kopell of the Center for Collaborative Policy welcomed attendees to the meeting. People introduced themselves.

The group began by reviewing the written summary of the previous (June 14) meeting. This was accepted with a few minor corrections.

Malka Kopell then reviewed the agenda (Supporting Document A). The agenda items fell into two main groups, the first continuing the series of presentations on ongoing groundwater studies begun at the previous meeting (agenda items 2 and 3), the second focusing on the GSA formation process (agenda items 4–6). The second group of items was expected to comprise the bulk of the meeting.

## 2. Overview of the Proposed Russian River Watershed Study

Tracy Nishikawa, Research Hydrologist for the U.S. Geological Survey, gave an overview of the USGS's proposed (and recently approved) Russian River Watershed Project.

### **Summary**

This study seeks to refine existing understandings of the hydrologic system of the Russian River, which has a highly variable hydrology and at least two medium-priority sub-basins. Using new data collection and modeling, the project will simulate the interaction between surface water and groundwater in the Basin by combining two existing USGS products to produce a *coupled watershed and groundwater model* called GS Flow. GS Flow is useful because it can model the relationship between changes in various land use patterns, climate (change) scenarios, and human-induced stresses on the hydrologic system (e.g., through various types of pumping). The project has four components planned over 4 years: stakeholder outreach, data collection and analysis (assembled using GIS), interpretation and characterization of hydrogeology, and developing the GS Flow model and coupling it with another model ("ModSim") in order to simulate water distribution under future anticipated conditions and thus help evaluate various basin management scenarios. (*Presentation slides are included as Supporting Document B.*)

### **Discussion**

- Will USGS modeling work be used to establish jurisdiction over various water sources (e.g. underflow versus groundwater)?

No, that's not the goal.

This regulatory angle has been "a giant gray area" for a lot of us [stakeholders].

- *[How will land use be incorporated in the model?]*

USGS will get as many land use maps as they can. Recent data is good, but historical data gets very difficult.

Some of this may be available from various county agencies.

- *How will USGS figure out which water sources agriculture growers are using?*

This is a big challenge; USGS has some tools to help figure this out (e.g., based on crop type and proximity to various water sources), but this is one of the reasons to also put effort into outreach, in order to get better data about well locations and so on.

- *When does the 4-year timeline begin?*

USGS just found out this project has been funded.

### 3. Update on Studies Coordination

Lead agencies/researchers associated with the various studies of the Basin<sup>1</sup> – the Mendocino County Water Agency, Sonoma County Water Agency, USGS, UC Davis and the City of Ukiah – held a conference call two weeks before the meeting to discuss ways to collaborate. A second call is planned for sometime in the next few weeks to continue this discussion.

### 4. GSA Formation: How We Will Work Together

Malka Kopell opened the GSA formation process discussion by offering a Draft "Preliminary/Proposed Common Principles and Formation Committee Process" document based on themes and ideas that have emerged from her ongoing stakeholder assessment and the previous meeting. She made the point that one of her responsibilities as a facilitator is to be "one step ahead" of the group, capturing points that the group is making and bringing them back for discussion; this document, included as Supporting Document C, is thus intended as a living document to help guide the GSA formation process. It is currently structured in terms of common principles, process points, and ground rules for interaction.

A few points of discussion followed:

- Malka proposed an additional ground rule: Don't assume we know what other members of the group are thinking.
- Time is of the essence; is it possible to move faster?
- Some SGMA processes form stakeholder advisory committees, but maybe that is not needed here; work groups dedicated to specific tasks and timelines, on the other hand, seem like a good idea.

### 5. GSA Formation: Element #1: Overall Governance Structure

Malka Kopell presented three broad options that most SGMA GSA formation discussions consider: (1) designating the existing county water agency as the sole GSA; (2) creating a new GSA with a diverse board of directors "from scratch;" and (3) creating a GSA with a diverse board of directors by modifying an existing institution. These options have a number of differences among them, as well as many

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<sup>1</sup> These include the two hydrologic studies presented at the previous (June 14) meeting and the USGS study presented in agenda item 2.

different possibilities within them; all involve various tradeoffs. It is thus preferable when making a decision about GSA structure to think about the goals for such a structure first: what this agency needs to accomplish, what resources it needs to accomplish its goals (resources, staffing, stakeholder representation, etc.)

	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<b>GSA Model 1: County-Led Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If additional basins (Bulletin 118) come on-line, county equipped to take on</li> <li>• Advisory Committee would serve as stakeholder voice</li> <li>• Neutral (“no dog in the fight”)</li> <li>• Efficient, ready to go</li> <li>• Uses existing infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaves out stakeholders of eligible agencies</li> <li>• Some members of Bd. of Supervisors have “no dog in the fight”</li> </ul>
<b>GSA Model 2: Diverse Board of Directors (Create new institution)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voting rights/structure can accommodate stakeholders</li> <li>• Increased representation</li> <li>• Could be expanded to include new groundwater basins</li> <li>• Could facilitate move to a single Ukiah Valley (or broader) water agency</li> <li>• Flexibility to adjust resources to do the work</li> </ul>	
<b>GSA Model 3: Diverse Board of Directors (Modify existing institution – e.g., IWPC, Upper Russian River JPA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased representation (nearly all qualifying agencies are already on IWPC board)</li> <li>• Could facilitate move to single Ukiah Valley (or broader) Water Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If IWPC – Focus to date is surface water – Potter Valley project and raising of Coyote Valley Dam – GSA responsibilities may dilute energy</li> <li>• If IWPC – GSA would be add’l responsibility for Potter Valley Irrigation District (currently on IWPC Bd)</li> <li>• New basins could also affect focus</li> <li>• More work to modify than create from scratch?</li> </ul>

At the moment, there is sufficient interest in all three models to keep all three on the table. The group then discussed what sort of working groups would be helpful going forward. This segued into the discussion of the workplan and next steps.

## 6. GSA Formation: Creating a Workplan for the Next Few Months

Malka presented a document called “GSA Formation: Workplan Elements and Timing” (Supporting Document D) that laid out four sets of decisions required in the SGMA implementation process. Governance structure (under discussion in agenda item 5) is the first step; subsequent steps involve deciding the legal structure, specific roles and responsibilities, and funding mechanism(s) for the chosen GSA. This document was discussed, and its tentative meeting schedule approved. The group then decided that a specific Working Group would meet before the next meeting in order to discuss these four (“workplan element”) issues.

The following individuals volunteered to be part of the Work Group:

- Sean White, City of Ukiah
- Tamara Alaniz, RRFC
- Devon Jones, Mendocino County FB
- Sarah Dukett, Mendocino County (will send invite)
- Glenn McGourty, UCCE
- Ben Henthorne III, Redwood Valley Rancheria
- Bill Koehler, Redwood Valley/Millview CWD

Hong Lin (California, DWR) is available if questions come up. Jeremiah Puget is available as well in case any questions come up on water quality.

## 7. Next Steps

The next meeting will take place August 18 at 1:00 pm (see Supporting Document D). The abovementioned Working Group will meet before the next meeting.

## Attendance

Attendees included but were not limited to the following individuals:

- R. Kellerman, CTTB
- Janet Pauli, MCIWPC
- Tamara Alaniz, RRFC
- Jerry Cardoza, Millview URRWA
- Cory O’Donnell, Sonoma County Water Agency
- Ann DuBay, Sonoma County Water Agency
- Kevin Doble, City of Ukiah
- Frost Pauli, MCFB
- Hong Lin, California DWR
- Jeremiah Puget, NCRWQCB
- Marcus Trotta, Sonoma County Water Agency
- Jon Traum, USGS
- Jordan Blough, LACO Associates
- Bill Koehler, Redwood Valley/Millview CWD
- Tracy Nishikawa, USGS
- Sam Sandoval, UC Davis
- Carre Brown, Mendocino County

- Devon Jones, Mendocino County FB
- Glenn McGourty, UCCE
- Deborah Edelman, MCRCD
- Susan Knopf, Ukiah
- Grenville Pool, RVCWD
- Kellen Kaiser
- Ben Henthorne III, Redwood Valley Rancheria
- Douglas Crane, City of Ukiah
- Paul Zellman, RRFC